

UNSTAGGERING FAITH

NO. 733

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 3, 1867,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.”
Romans 4:19-21.

IT was God’s purpose that Abraham should be a surpassingly excellent example of the power of faith. He was to be “the father of the faithful,” the mirror, pattern and paragon of faith. He was ordained to be the supreme believer of the patriarchal age, the serene and venerable leader of the noble army of believers in Jehovah, the faithful and true God. In order to produce so eminent a character, it was necessary that Abraham’s faith should be exercised in a special and unequalled manner. The power of his faith could not be known except by putting it to the severest tests. To this end, among other trials of his faith, God gave him a promise that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed, and yet for many a year he remained without an heir. The promise, when originally given, startled Abraham, but he did not doubt it. We read that he laughed, laughed with holy joy at the thought of so great and unexpected a blessing. It also startled his wife Sarah; she did, however, doubt it—and when she laughed it was the laugh of disbelief. The fulfillment of the promise was long delayed. Abraham waited with patience, sojourning as a stranger in a strange land, having respect unto the covenant which the Lord had made with him and with his unborn seed. Not a shadow of doubt crossed the mind of the holy patriarch, he staggered not at the promise through unbelief, and though he came to be 100 years old, and his wife Sarah was almost equally as advanced in years, he did not listen to the voice of carnal reason, but maintained his confidence in God. Doubtless he had well weighed the natural impossibilities which laid in the way, but he overlooked the whole, and being fully persuaded that if God had promised him a son the son would certainly be born, he entertained a holy confidence, and left the matter of time in the hands of the sovereign ruler. His faith triumphed in all its conflicts. Had it not been that Sarah and Abraham were both at such an advanced age there would have been no credit to them in believing the promise of God, but the more difficult, the more impossible the fulfillment of the promise seemed to be, the more wonderful was Abraham’s faith, that he still held to it that what God had promised He was able to perform. If I may so say, there was in Abraham’s case a double death to stand in the way of the promise, not one difficulty in itself insuperable, but two, two absolute impossibilities; and yet, though one impossibility might have been enough to stagger any man, the two together could not cause his faith to waver. He considered not the natural impediments; he allowed them no space in the account, they seemed to be less than nothing in the presence of the truth and power of the Almighty God. The Most High God had given a promise, and that fact overrode 10,000 adverse arguments. His was that noble confidence of which we sing—

*“Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone;
Laughs at impossibilities
And cries, ‘It shall be done!’”*

By such unquestioning confidence Abraham brought glory to God. It glorifies God greatly for His servants to trust Him; they then become witnesses to His faithfulness, just as His works in creation are

witnesses of His power and wisdom. Abraham was a noble instance of the power which the truthfulness of God exerts over the human mind, when under all discouragements he still “believed God.” His heart said of the living God, “He cannot lie; He will perform His promise.” While glorifying God, Abraham reaped a present consolation to himself, and in the end he had the joy of receiving the promise. His early laugh of joy was remembered and commemorated in his son Isaac, that child of promise, whose name was “laughter.” The patriarch himself became one of the most honored of men, for it is written, “He who honors Me I will honor.”

Brothers and sisters, this is the point to which I want to bring you, that if God intends to make you or me, any one of us, or all of us together, to be distinguishing exhibitors of the divine grace of faith, we must expect to be passed through very much the same trials as Abraham. With regard to the object upon which our faith is exercised, it is most probable that we shall be made to feel our own weakness and even our personal death; we shall be brought very low, even into an utter self-despair; we shall be made to see that the mercy we are seeking of God is a thing impossible with man; it is very probable that difficulties will rise before us till they are enough to overwhelm us, not only one range of mountainous impossibilities, but another will be seen towering up behind the first, till we are pressed beyond measure, and led to an utter despair of the matter as considered in ourselves. At such a crisis, if God the Holy Spirit is working with mighty power in us we shall still believe that the divine promise will be fulfilled; we shall not entertain a doubt concerning the promise; we shall remember that it remains with God to find ways and means and not with ourselves; we shall cast the burden of fulfilling the promise upon Him with whom it naturally rests. Go on, then, in steady, holy, confident joy, looking for the end of our faith and patiently pleading until we reach it. The Lord will honor and comfort us in so doing, and in the end He will grant us the desire of our hearts, for none who trust in Him shall ever be confounded, world without end! Let us this morning firmly lay hold upon this general principle, that God will empty us of self completely before He will accomplish any great thing by us, thus removing from us every pretext for claiming the glory for ourselves; but at such seasons of humiliation it is our privilege to exercise unabated faith, for the fulfillment of the promise is not imperiled, but rather may be looked upon as drawing near. May the Holy Spirit guide us while we endeavor to apply the general principle to distinct cases.

First, we shall view it in application *to the individual worker for Christ*; then, secondly, we shall take it *in connection with the church associated for Christian service*; thirdly, we shall apply it briefly to the case of *a pleader wrestling with God in prayer*; and, fourthly, we shall show its bearing upon the case of *a seeker*, showing that he also will have to feel his own natural death and utter helplessness, and then faith will find all necessary grace stored up in the promise-Giving God.

I. TO THE INDIVIDUAL WORKER we have a message.

I trust I address many brothers and sisters who have wholly consecrated themselves to the service of God, and have been for months or years perseveringly toiling in the Redeemer’s cause. Now, it is probable, very probable indeed, that you are more than ever conscious of your own spiritual weakness. “Oh,” you say, “if God intends to bless souls, I cannot see how they can be blessed through me. If sinners are to be converted, I feel myself to be the most unfit and unworthy instrument to be used by God in the whole world. If He shall be pleased to smile upon the endeavors of some evangelist, or a pastor, or a zealous Christian, I shall be very grateful, and not at all surprised; but if He should ever bless me it will be a most astonishing thing, I would scarcely be able to believe my own eyes.” Such a lowly sense of our own unfitness is common even at the beginning of real Christian labor, and arises from the unexpected and novel difficulties with which we are surrounded. We are then unused to Christian labor, and whether we have to speak in public or to plead with individual sinners we do not feel at home with the work at first, and are oppressed with a sense of weakness. We have not gone this way before, and being quite new at the work, Satan whispers, “You are a poor creature to pretend to serve God. Go back to your retirement, and leave this service to better men.” Dear friends, who are thus tempted, take comfort from the word this morning. It is necessary to any great blessing that you should feel your weakness, and see death written upon all carnal strength; this is a part of your preparation for great usefulness; you

must be made to feel early in the work, if you are to have an early blessing, that all the glory must be of God; your fancied excellence must fade away, and you yourself must become in your own esteem as feeble as a little child.

I think, however, that a sense of weakness grows on the Christian worker. To continue in harness year after year is not without its wear and tear; our spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak, and faintness in pursuing reveals to us that our own strength is perfect weakness. Personally, I feel my own spiritual inability much more strongly than I did when I began to preach the gospel. There was a novelty and an excitement then about the exercise which gave a degree of counterfeit facility in it; but now it comes almost every day in the week, twice each day, and this constant utterance, the proclamation of the same gospel, finds out the weak joints in our armor. One is not weary of it, thank God, but still there is a languor which creeps over us, and the old novelty and flash which apparently helped us is now gone, and we feel much more vividly than at first that without the energy of the Holy Spirit we can do nothing, absolutely nothing. You experienced Sunday school teachers, and you parents seeking the conversion of your children are, I doubt not, much more conscious now that all your strength must come from above than you once were. You held as a sort of orthodox creed that you were nothing, but now you feel that you are less than nothing; the more earnest your labors for the Lord, the clearer will be your sense of your own nothingness.

There are times when a lack of success or a withering of our cherished hopes will help to make us feel most keenly how barren and unfruitful we are until the Lord endows us with His Spirit. Those whom we thought to be converted turn out to be merely the subjects of transient excitement, those who stood long, and for years appeared to honor the cross of Christ, turn aside and pierce us through with many sorrows, and then we cry out, "Woe is me! How shall I speak any more in the name of the Lord?" Like Moses, we would have the Lord send by whomever He would send, but not by us; or like Elijah, we hide ourselves for fear, and say "Let me die, I am no better than my fathers." I suppose there is no successful worker who is quite free from times of deep depression, times when his fears make him say, "Surely I took up this work myself through presumption, I ran without being called; I have willfully thrust myself into a position where I am subject to great danger and great toil, without having the strength which is required for the place." At such moments, it only needs another push from Satan, a little withdrawing of God's hand, to make us like Jonah go down to Joppa, and see if we can find a ship to take us away to Tarshish, that we may no longer bear the burden of the Lord. My brother, my sister, I am not sorry if you are passing through this fiery ordeal. If your strength is dried up like a potsherd, if your strength is shriveled like a skin-bottle that has been hanging up in the smoke, if you feel as though your personal power was altogether paralyzed, I do not regret it, for know you not that it is in your weakness God will show His own strength, and when there is an end of you there will be a beginning of Him? When you are brought to feel, "Neither have I any strength, nor know I what to do," then will you lift up your eyes to the strong One, from whom comes all your true help, and then will His mighty arm be made bare.

In laying down the general principle drawn from the text we observed that there existed a double difficulty, and that even this did not abate Abraham's confidence. It may be that a sense of our own unworthiness is not our only discouragement, but that our sphere of Christian effort is remarkably unpromising. You did not know, my dear friend, when you commenced your evangelistic efforts, how hard the human heart was. You were like young Melancthon—you thought you could easily conquer the human heart, but you now discover that old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon. You had heard of other brothers who preached or taught without success, and you said to yourselves, "There must be something very wrong in them or in their teaching, I will not fall into their errors; I at least will be wise and discreet; my methods shall be more Christ-like, more suitable, and more effective; I shall surely win souls." But now you find that hearts with you are as hard as hearts with other men. In that little Sunday school class of yours the boys are still obstinate, the girls still frivolous. You had not reckoned upon this. You accepted it as matter of doctrine that they were depraved, but you supposed that under your treatment

that depravity would soon disappear. You are disappointed, for the children seem even worse than others. The more you try to influence their hearts the less you succeed, and the more earnest your endeavors to bring them to Jesus, the more it seems the sin that dwells in them is provoked. It is possible that you are called to labor where the prejudices of the people are against the gospel, where the temptations and habits and ways of thought are all dead against the chance of success. We constantly meet with brothers who say, "I could prosper anywhere else, but I cannot succeed where I now am." Perhaps they complain, "It is a population of working men," and this they look upon as a dreadful evil, whereas I believe that no class will better reward the labors of the earnest preacher of the gospel. Or else they say, "They are all rich people, and I cannot get at them," whereas where there is a will there is a way. Or the neighborhood is subject to the influence of some established church, or all taken up with other congregations; there is sure to be found difficulty, and Christian work never does

The fact is, to save a soul is the work of Deity, to turn the human will towards holiness is the work of Omnipotence; and unless you and I have made up our minds to that, we had better go back to retirement and meditation, for we are not ready for labor. You tell me your particular sphere is one in which you can do nothing; I am glad to hear it. Such is mine; such is the true position of every Christian worker; he is called by God to do impossibilities; he is but a worm, and yet he is to thresh the mountains and beat them small. Will he do it? Yes, that he will, if his faith is equal to the work. If God but enables him to call in divine Strength, the absence of human strength will be gain to him, and the difficulties and impossibilities will only be as a platform upon which God shall be uplifted, and God's strength the better displayed. Settle it in your heart, my dear friend, that there is great labor to be accomplished if souls are to be won; and in that class, or that tract distributing, that hamlet, that preaching station, there is a work quite out of your reach, and if you do not enlist the power of a heavenly arm, you will come back and say, "I have labored in vain, and spent my strength for nothing." It is well for you to know it. Here are you without power, and the work cannot help you, will not help you, it will bring every obstacle to impede you. You without strength and the work more than human, see your position and be prepared for it.

Yet the godly worker has that which sustains him, for he has a promise from God. Abraham had received a promise. "In you and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Grasping this with a tight hold, he knew the difficulties and weighed them; but having done so, he put them away as not worth considering. God had said it, and that was enough for him. To him the promise of God was as good as the fulfillment. Just as in trade you often consider some men's bills to be as good as cash, so in this case God's promise was as good to Abraham as the fulfillment itself. Now, brother, if you and I are to be successful in our work for God, we too must get hold of a promise. I think I hear you say, "If I heard a heavenly voice saying to me, 'Go and labor, and I will give you success,' I should doubt no more. If I could have a special revelation, just as Abraham had to him, personally, that would alter the case; but I have not received such a special promise, and am therefore full of fear." Now, observe, God gives His promises in many ways. Sometimes He gives them to individuals, at other times to classes of character; and which is the better of the two? I think you should prefer the second. Suppose God had given to you personally a promise, your unbelief would say, "Ah, it is all fancy; it was not the Lord, it was only a dream." But now God has been pleased to give the revelation, in your case, to character. Shall I quote it? Here it is: "He that goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Now is not that yourself? Your name is not there, but your *character* is, for you have gone forth, you have wept, and you have carried forth precious seed! The Lord declares that such an one shall doubtless come again rejoicing!

Now, although your name is not in the book absolutely, it is there virtually, and the promise is just as sure to you. If any man of honor were to issue a promise that all persons appearing at his door at such an hour should receive relief, if he did not give relief to all who appeared, he would be quite as guilty of breach of promise as though he had picked out all the persons by name and given them the promise. The promise is not affected by the absence of the name if the character is there described. I will give you another promise of God: "My word shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I

please, it shall prosper in the thing where I sent it.” Have you delivered God’s word, my dear friend? There is the question. If you have, then God declares it shall not return unto Him void; it shall prosper in the thing where He sent it; and that promise is quite as good as though your particular initials had been affixed to it, or it had been spoken to you by the voice of an angel in the visions of the night! A promise, however given is equally binding upon a man of honor, and a promise from God, no matter how delivered, is sure of fulfillment; all you have to do is to lay hold upon it. I have gone forth weeping, and I have sown precious seed, therefore God says I shall come again rejoicing, bringing my sheaves with me. I cannot create the sheaves, and the sheaves as yet do not appear in the field, but I shall have them, for what God has promised He is able also to perform. The thing is to get a promise distinctly and clearly before your mind’s eye, and then to defy all discouragements. Oh my brothers, may you be so weak that you may be as dead, and yet at the same time may you be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, because your faith has made the omnipotence of God to be at your command.

Abraham having his full conviction that God would fulfill His own promise, was happy about it, cheerful, rejoicing, comforted, feeling as content to wait as he would have been to receive the blessing at once. He was always full of sacred joy, and thus always glorified God; for those who saw the holy patriarch’s serenity of mind naturally inquired who was his God, and when they heard of the Most High they glorified the God of Abraham. In due season the promise came, and the patriarchal tent was glad with a gladness which never left it. Abraham spoke well of his God, and his God dealt well with him. I want you, Christian workers, to seek as before God to tread in the steps of Abraham. While fully aware that you are powerless in yourselves, rest upon the promise of God; go to your work counting no risks, making no calculations, but believing that where God’s promise is concerned, the bare suspicion of failure is not to be endured. Perhaps next to Abraham there was not, in the olden times, a man of more childlike faith than Samson. One weeps over his many infirmities, but one admires the marvelous simplicity of his dependence upon God. When a thousand foes are in array against him he never calculates; he is all alone, unarmed and bound with cords; he snaps his bonds, and seizing the jawbone of an ass, he flies at the hosts of the armed men as if he had a thousand helpers, and they but an equal match for him, and heaps upon heaps he dashes them down till he cries, “With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of an ass have I slain a thousand men.” He was a man who, if God had said, “Shoulder the world like Atlas,” would have carried it as readily as he did the gates of Gaza. He had no thought but of God’s power and he was reckless of danger when he felt that God was with him. See him in that memorable death-deed, see him taking hold of the pillars after he had been left of God, blind, and shut up in prison all those dreary months; he has even now enough confidence in God to believe that He will help him at the last! Depend upon it, brothers and sisters it is great faith that can believe in God after times of desertion. But look! He puts his hands upon those ponderous pillars; he prays, and then he tugs and strains; down, down they come, and Israel’s God is avenged upon Israel’s foe!

That is the kind of spirit I should like to get into my own soul; a spirit conscious that it can do nothing alone, conscious that the work is beyond human possibility, but equally clear that it can do everything that through God there is nothing beyond the range of its capacity.

II. Dear friends, members of this church, I need your earnest attention while I try to show the bearing of this upon THIS CHURCH AND EVERY CHURCH IN A SIMILAR CONDITION.

We have set our hearts upon a thorough revival of religion in our midst. Some of my brothers associated with me in the deaconship and eldership have made this a matter of constant prayer to God, that we may see this year greater things than we have ever seen, and there are many in the membership of the same mind who have besieged the throne of God with constant applications. It will be, as a preparation for the work which God will work among us, a very blessed thing for us as a church to feel how utterly powerless we are in this matter. God has blessed us these 13 years; we have enjoyed continued prosperity; we have scarcely known what to do with the blessing God has given us. Truly in our case He has fulfilled the promise, “I will pour out My blessing upon you so that you shall not have room to receive it.” But I fear that our temptation is to lean upon an arm of flesh, to suppose there is some power in the min-

istry, or in our organization, or in the zeal which has characterized us. Brothers and sisters, let us divest ourselves of all that pride, that detestable, abominable, soul-weakening vice, which is as evil and as hurtful to us as it is abominable to God. We can no more save a soul than make a world, and as to causing a genuine revival by our own efforts, we might as well talk of whirling the stars from their sphere! Poor helpless worms we are in this matter. If God helps us we can pray, but without His aid our prayer will be mockery. If God helps us we can preach, but apart from Him our preaching is but a weary tale told without power or energy. You must each of you ask the Lord to take you down into the depths of your own nothingness, and reveal to you your utter unworthiness to be used in His work. Try to get a deeply humiliating sense of your own weakness. As a church we want to be kept low before the Lord. Why what are we as a church? There are some sad sinners among us, who are such clever hypocrites that we cannot find them out, and there are others who walk so ill that we fear they are tares among the wheat. The best of us are far from being as good as we should be. We have all grave accusations to bring against ourselves. If the Lord Jesus were to write on the ground here and say, "He that is without fault among you, let him throw the first stone at lukewarm Christians," I do not know who is the oldest and whether he would try to go out first, but I should follow very closely at his heels. We are all verily guilty before the Lord; we have not done as we ought, nor as we might—we are unworthy that He should use us, and if He should write, "Ichabod," in letters of fire over this Tabernacle, and leave this house to be desolate as Shiloh was of old, He might well do it and none could blame Him. Let us all confess this.

Next, there is not only difficulty in ourselves but difficulty in the work. We want to see all these people converted to God, and truly some of our hearers are hopeless enough, for I have been preaching to them for 10 or 12 years and they are not a whit the better but the worse for it—they have grown gospel-hardened. My voice used to startle you once, and the honest truth of God made you feel, but it is not so now. You are as used to my voice as the miller to the click of his mill; you are made ready for the uttermost wrath of God, for there is no place that can prepare a man for Hell so readily as the place of rejected invitations and neglected admonitions. Yet, dear hearers, we desire to see you converted, and by the grace of God we hope to see it. But what can *we* do? The preacher can do nothing, for he has done his best to bring you to Christ and has failed, and all that any of our most earnest friends can suggest will fail also. The work is impossible with us, but do we therefore give up the attempt? No, for is it not written, "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek you My face in vain"? We cannot seek God's face in vain, and if this church continues to pray as it has done an answer of peace must be given us. We do not know how the promise is to be fulfilled, but we believe it will be fulfilled, and we leave it with our God. There is another promise, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." Christ must see of His soul's travail, must see of it in this place too. We expect to see men, women, and children converted in this place, and to hear multitudes of sinners crying, "What must I do to be saved?" We have God's promise for it; *we* cannot do it, but *He* can. What shall we do? Why, just in joyous confidence continue steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Go again to our knees in prayer, feeling that the result is not haphazard. Jesus pleads His wounds, and cannot be denied. The Lord cannot draw back from His Word. He must do according to His people's desires when He Himself writes those desires upon their hearts, and when they have grown into earnest striving, and wrestling, and mounted into believing expectations, they must be fulfilled. If we can only get a dozen men and women among you really humbled before God to feel your own emptiness, and yet to believe the promise, I expect to see within the next few months a blessing of such an extent as we have never received before. God send this, and His be the glory!

III. For a minute—if there had been time I would have liked to apply this principle TO EVERY PLEADING SOUL that is wrestling with God in prayer, but as I have not the time I will dismiss it in these words. Dear friends, if your heart has been set upon any special object in prayer, if you have an express promise for it (and mark, that is indispensable), you must not be staggered if the objective of your desire seems farther off now than when you first began to pray. If even after months of supplication the thing should seem more difficult now of attainment than ever it was, wait at the mercy seat in the full

persuasion that although God may take His time, and that time may not be your time, yet He must and will redeem His promise when the fullness of time has come. If you have prayed for the salvation of your child, or husband, or friend, and that person has grown worse instead of better, do not cease praying. If that dear little one has become more obstinate, and that husband even more profane, still God must be held to His word; and if you have the faith to challenge His attributes of faithfulness and power, assuredly He never did and never will let your prayers fall fruitless to the ground; and I repeat the word that you may be sure to carry that away with you, let not the fact that the answer seems farther off than ever be any discouragement to you. Remember that to trust God in the light is nothing—but to trust Him in the dark—that is faith. To rest upon God when everything witnesses with God is nothing, but to believe God when everything gives Him the lie—that is faith. To believe that all shall go well when outward providences blow softly is any fool's play, but to believe that it *must* and *shall* be well when storms and tempests are round about you, and you are blown farther and farther from the harbor of your desire—this is a work of divine grace. By this shall you know whether you are a child of God or not—by seeing whether you can exercise faith in the power of prayer when all things forbid you to hope.

IV. I desire to spend the last five minutes in addressing THE SEEKER. Surely among this throng there must be some of you who long to be saved. If so, it is likely that since you have begun to seek salvation, instead of being happier you are far more miserable. You imagined at one time that you could believe in Jesus whenever you liked, that you could become a Christian at your own will at any moment; and now you wake up to find that the will is present with you, but how to perform that which you desire you find not. You desire to break the chains of sin, but those sins were far easier to bind than to loose. You want to come to Jesus with a broken heart, but your heart refuses to break. You long to trust Jesus, but your unbelief is so mighty that you cannot see His cross—you cannot look with the look which makes a sinner live. Will you think me cruel if I say I am glad to find you in this poverty-stricken state, for I believe that in your case you must *know* your own powerlessness, you *must* be brought to feel that as far as salvation is concerned you are dead, utterly dead. Every sinner must learn that he is by nature dead in trespasses and sins, and that the work of salvation is a work impossible to him—it is high above out of his reach. I want you to know that more and more, and if it should drive you to a thorough self-despair, none will be more thankful than I shall be, for despair is the nearest way to faith in our philosophy. Self-despair throws a man upon his God; he feels that he can do nothing and he turns to one who can do all things.

Now, friend, if you are as I have said convinced of your nothingness, the next thing is, can you find a promise? There is one I pray the Lord to give you this morning: “Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Have you called upon the name of the Lord? That is to say, have you cried to Him, “God be merciful to me a sinner”? Well, if you have not, I pray you do it now. If you so call, you must be saved. True, you cannot save yourself; I am glad you know that; but what *you* cannot do, in that you are weak through the flesh, God will do, for there is His promise, “Whoever comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” Now, will you come? If so, you cannot be cast out. “Whoever believes on Him is not condemned.” Do you believe on the Lord Jesus? Do you take Him now to be your Savior? If you do, your personal lack of power shall be no hindrance. You have no power whatever, but there is none needed in you. When Christ raised the dead he did not rake among the ashes to find a lingering spark of vitality, but He said, “Live.” And if you are as dead as Lazarus of whom Martha said, “Lord, by this time he stinks,” the voice of mercy can yet make you live. Can you believe this? If you can believe in Jesus you shall be saved! If you can believe that Jehovah Jesus, the Son of God, can save you, and if you can rest upon His merits, though in you there is no grain of merit, though in you there is no vestige of power or spiritual strength, this shall not stand in your way; and though your sins are as damnable as those of Satan, and your iniquity of heart as deep as Hell itself, yet if you can trust in Jesus to save you, difficulty vanishes before the merit of His blood.

I know you say, “If I felt happy I could trust Christ. If I felt tender, if I felt holy.” No, friend, you would not be trusting *Christ*, you would be trusting your *feelings*, and your *tenderness* would be your

confidence. But now you have no feeling of tenderness or holiness that can recommend you to God. Come then as you are, wretched, undone, self-condemned, and self-abhorred; come and cast yourself upon the mercy of God as He reveals Himself in the bleeding body of His dear Son, and if you can do this you will glorify God. “Oh,” you say, “how could such a poor soul as I am ever bring glory to God?” Sinner, I say it is in your power, if God enables you, to bring more glory to God in a certain sense than the living saint can, for the living saint only believes that God can keep him alive, but for you under a pressing sense of guilt still to believe that Jesus can give you perfect liberty and save you—oh, this glorifies Him! There is not an angel before the throne of God who can believe such great things of God as you can. An angel has no sin. He cannot, therefore, believe that Jesus can put away his sin, but you can. “If you believe in Jesus, though your sins are as scarlet they shall be as wool, though they are red like crimson they shall be whiter than snow.” If you do God the honor to believe that He can do what He has said; if you rest in Jesus, you shall have the comfort, He shall have the glory, and your soul shall have the salvation. Emptied of self you have no life, no strength, and no goodness; in fact you have nothing to recommend you, but come as you are and the Lord will bless you and give you the desire of your heart, and unto Him be the glory. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JAMES 1.

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